

KEITH J. STEINER

Numerals: Hawaiian Kingdom Stamps that Fill a Need and Fascinate Collectors Worldwide, 1859–1866

THE WORLD'S FIRST POSTAGE STAMP to show that the governmental postal rate had been paid was the one-cent "Penny Black" issued by Great Britain in May, 1840,¹ and other nations soon adopted the idea. The first postage stamp of the United States government was sold on July 1, 1847,² being a five-cent denomination which paid the rate for a ½ ounce letter sent up to 300 miles.³ With inflation, these five cents would equate to about \$1.21 in today's dollars.⁴ The Kingdom of

¹ Scott Publishing Co. *Scott 1995 Classic Catalog, Stamps Of The World Including U. S., 1840–1940* (Ohio: 1994) 323. Earlier stamps or stamped envelopes existed, but they were issued by local postal authorities or private concerns.

² Scott Publishing Co., *Scott 1995 Classic Catalog*, 2.

³ Bob Allen, Senior Editor, Postage Stamps of the United States First Issued in 1847 <http://www.1847usa.com/1847identifier.htm>.

⁴ Robert C. Sahr, Consumer Price Index (CPI) Conversion Factors 1774 to estimated 2019 to Convert to Dollars of 2006, Political Science Department, Oregon State University, <http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/individual-year-conversion-factor-table>.

Keith Steiner, an attorney retired from private practice, was born and raised in Hawai'i and is a graduate of Yale University and Stanford Law School. He is the author of the book titled Hawai'i's Early Territorial Days, Viewed from Vintage Postcards by Island Curio, published in 2001.

The Hawaiian Journal of History, vol. 43 (2009)

Hawai'i issued its first postage stamps on October 1, 1851, which put it ahead of some European countries: Portugal did not issue its first until 1853, and Russia waited until 1857.⁵

Over the next 40 years, from 1851 to 1891, the Kingdom of Hawai'i would bring forth a number of stamp issues that were in quality and appearance equal to those of the United States and superior to those of many larger countries. These issues evolved from the early handset type of stamps to those needing to be cut apart and then to those that were perforated and commercially printed. Hawai'i stamps have been of special interest to collectors worldwide from the first issue and particularly after this hobby "gained traction" in the 1860s. The plain, handset type Numerals, so named because of the large denomination number in the center of the stamp, were of particular fascination as they come from a far off Pacific island, a paradise kingdom, but also because of their appearance. Issued from 1859 to 1866, the simple design of the Numerals was striking when contrasted to those of the United States, Great Britain, and many other countries, where depictions of heads of state and other important figures were the norm.

The first stamp issues of Hawai'i, those printed in 1851, were the "Missionaries," so named as they were used mainly by that group to correspond to the East Coast. At that time, the Hawai'i prepaid postal rate for a ½ oz. letter to the East Coast of the United States was 13 cents; this being five cents for the Hawaiian government, six cents for U. S. postage, and two cents for the ship's captain.⁶ At the same time, however, there was no charge for mail sent within the kingdom. This practice had been in effect for many years, and was incorporated into the legislation of June 18, 1851 setting up the Hawaiian postal system. This was due to the then politically influential American missionaries, who adamantly believed this would encourage the native population to learn the skills of reading and writing, and that even a low rate, such as two cents for a letter, would impose such a cost that correspondence would be discouraged. In 1854, for example, the Minister of the Interior, Lot Kamehameha who was later King Kamehameha V,

⁵ Scott Publishing Co., *Scott 1995 Classic Catalog*, 638, 668.

⁶ Post Office in Paradise, "Early Treaty Rates," <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/ratesearly.html>.

noted in his report to the legislature that although imposing a small charge would bring in revenue, there would be expenses, and he viewed free mail “. . . as contributing in some degree to the advancement of the nation in civilization.”⁷

The volume of free mail soon caused financial losses, and there was also abuse, with bags of fruit, large hats, and the like brought to the post office and often accepted for mailing.⁸ Despite bitter resistance from the missionaries and others, there was increasing pressure for local rates to be instituted, and in 1859 the law was changed. According to the text of the Civil Code for 1859,⁹ the effective date for the requirement of payment for mail within the kingdom was July 1, 1859, but it appears that August 1 was treated as the effective date. An explanation may be that the postal authorities simply could not meet a July 1 deadline and set a month later as the target. It was, after all, a kingdom. The most important new rates for mail within the kingdom were two cents for a letter, the first one-half ounce, and one cent for a newspaper but exempting those mailed to subscribers from the place of publication. Public notice was given by Postmaster General Joseph Jackson on June 25, 1859.¹⁰

An immediate problem was Hawai‘i had only five-cent and 13-cent stamps for mail going overseas (fig. 1-A). These were engraved, without perforations and printed in Boston, as Hawai‘i, like many countries at that time, did not have the proper facilities to print its own stamps. It took at least four months for a letter to get to the East Coast and for a response to be received.¹¹ As a practical matter, it probably would have taken eight months for finished stamps to be ordered and received, considering the steps: the initial inquiry to the printing house, response back, sending authorization to the printing house to proceed, design work done, acceptance in Hawai‘i of the design, the printing and finally delivery to Hawai‘i. “Numerals” set from movable

⁷ Henry A. Meyer and Rear Admiral Frederick A. Harris, et al, *Hawaii, Its Stamps and Postal History* (New York: The Philatelic Foundation, 1948) 62–63.

⁸ PostOfficeinParadise, “LocalandInter-IslandRates,” <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/dmrates.html>.

⁹ *The Civil Code of the Hawaiian Islands*, 1859, at Section 406.

¹⁰ J. F. Westerberg, *Plating The Hawaiian Numerals* (Honolulu: The Mission Press, 1968) x.

¹¹ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 127.



A



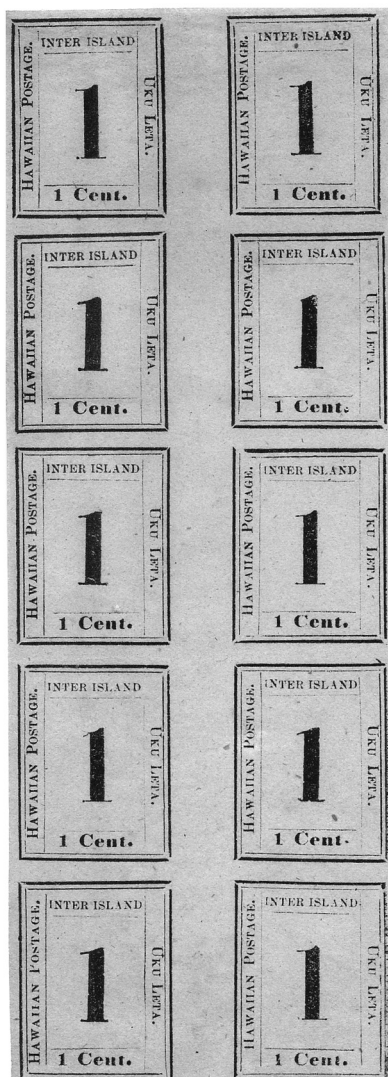
C



D



E



B

FIGURE 1:

- A: Five-Cent, Boston-Engraved, Overseas Stamp. Printed in 1857, it features Kamehameha III.
- B: Example of a Numeral "Pane" Composed of Ten "Cliché". The one-cent Numerals are from the Fourth Setting printed in 1862 or 1863 with black ink on white paper.
- C: Two-Cent Numeral from the First Setting. Sold in 1859, the Numeral was printed with blue ink on bluish paper.
- D: One-Cent Numeral from the Second Setting. This stamp was printed in 1859 to mail newspapers and used blue ink on bluish paper.
- E: Two-Cent Numeral from the Third Setting. This 1859 printing was the first produced by the Government Printing Office and used black ink on grayish paper.

type, provided the solution to satisfy this immediate need. In his June 25, 1859 public notice, Postmaster Jackson stated that “temporary” stamps for inter-island mail would be available July 15, 1859.¹²

No governmental records for the Numerals are known regarding the design, dates of printing, or numbers printed. Regarding dates of official issuance, only the date of those sold starting July 15, 1859 is certain. What we surmise today, almost 150 years after the first of the Numerals was issued, is based on correspondence, recollections of early postmasters and others then connected with the postal system, the stamps themselves and other “hearsay,” and these sources are sometimes inconsistent. The chronological order of issuance of the printings, but not the actual dates, has been remedied by the research of J. Frederick Westerberg which was published in 1968.¹³

A possible explanation for the lack of records is that Numerals were viewed as temporary or provisional; to be used until a regular issue could be obtained. Joseph Jackson and Alvah K. Clark, the two early postmaster generals when the Numerals were first used, apparently believed that there would be a drop in inter-island mail, and the local rates, being unpopular, would not last. To everyone’s surprise, the volume of local mail kept increasing.¹⁴

Henry J. Crocker, perhaps the most noted collector of Numerals in the early 1900s, speculated that the designer of the Numerals was Professor W. D. Alexander, then head of Oahu College, now Punahou School. Former Postmaster General Clark told Crocker he did not think it was Alexander, but could not recall who was.¹⁵

The design was simple and required that the printer need only select a large central number for the denomination from his stock of movable type pieces, the few characters needed for text at the four borders, and type pieces to create the outer borders and the inner lines and fillers to create spaces. Ten separate blocks of print type were assembled in this fashion. The assembled block is a “cliché.” These clichés were then arranged in two columns of five, put in a

¹² Westerberg, *Plating The Hawaiian Numerals*, 1.

¹³ Westerberg, *Plating The Hawaiian Numerals*, 24–75.

¹⁴ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 65.

¹⁵ Henry J. Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals* (San Francisco: privately printed, 1909)

metal “chase,” locked tight and placed in a small, hand operated press used normally to run off letterheads, bills, cards, and other smaller sized printing jobs.¹⁶ Long sheets of paper were fed into the press so that five panes were printed, on a sheet, a “pane” being the imprint made by the press on the paper (fig. 1-B). The Numerals were imperforate (i.e., without perforations) so the individual stamps had to be separated by scissors or a sharp knife. To change a denomination, such as from one cent to two cents, the printer usually substituted in each of the ten clichés only the large central Numeral and such other print pieces as were necessary for the new denomination. During the period from August 1, 1859 until sometime in 1866, there were at least 26 printings, providing one-cent, two-cent and even five-cent Numerals.

Some explanation of Hawaiian Numeral terminology may be helpful. A “setting” represents the ten clichés, assembled and ready to print a certain denomination. A change of denomination created a new setting, and there were twelve different settings. After the required number of Numerals ordered had been printed, the assembled type was removed from the press but kept intact with string and stored in a safe.¹⁷ In the second, third, and fifth settings, which were set up for two-cent Numerals, there were successive printings. Although the same assembled blocks of type were reused, major or minor differences occurred in these printings which serve to identify a particular printing within that setting. Differences include: use of a different ink; use of a different paper; minor changes in the type placement made by the printer to correct a perceived problem; or a minor shifting of the borders, rules, and other type pieces which took place during the removal, storing and later replacement in the press. The separate printing within a setting is a “Plate,” and given a capital letter, with the first Plate printed being “A”, the second printing, if there was one, being “B” and so forth. For example, the first setting, the two-cent stamp ready for sale in July 1859, had only one Plate or printing, and this is identified as Plate 1-A. The third setting, also two

¹⁶ Westerberg, *Plating the Hawaiian Numerals*, 4, 5.

¹⁷ Col. Charles C. Gill, “The Stamps of Hawaii,” *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, 12 Feb. 1944, 539.

cents, had eight separate printings between 1859 and 1862, and the seventh printing in that sequence is Plate 3-G.

The phrase “Uku Leta” appearing in the Numerals is not a common Hawaiian expression. It is contrived, and probably meant to indicate that the letter rate was paid.¹⁸

The first setting provided a two-cent Numeral and was in blue ink on bluish paper (fig. 1-C). It was immediately changed to the second setting for a one-cent Numeral intended for newspapers, and was in the same colors (fig. 1-D). Insufficient quantities were printed, and the initial supply of the two-cent stamp was soon exhausted.

In late August or early September of 1859, the second setting was changed to the third setting to print two-cent denominations. These were Plates 3-A and 3-B, again in blue ink on bluish white paper. The supply from these two Plates also ran out.

Up to this point in time, printing was by the *Commercial Advertiser*, owned by Henry M. Whitney, who had been the Postmaster General when the Hawaiian postal system was first officially set up. Whitney was the son of American missionaries and at that time a prominent businessman in Honolulu.¹⁹ In August of 1859, Joseph Jackson, Postmaster General, was dying of consumption, and many of his post office duties were carried out by a friend, Alvah K. Clark, who became familiar with the postal operations. Jackson died on August 14, 1859, and on September 1, 1859, King Kamehameha IV appointed Clark as the successor Postmaster General.²⁰

Clark was born in Honolulu in 1831, graduated from Oahu College, and at age 18 left Hawai‘i, became a businessman, and then returned in 1850. His appointment did not sit well with Joseph Carter, Whitney’s business manager, who wanted to be Postmaster General. Relations between Clark and Carter were not good. Before introduction of the new rates in August 1859, the *Commercial Advertiser*, Whitney’s newspaper, had been mailed to subscribers free of charge, but under the wording of the new law the free rate only applied if the

¹⁸ DeSoto Brown, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, personal communication.

¹⁹ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 23–24; Helen G. Chapin, “An Official Post Office,” Hawaiian Historical Society, <http://www.hawaiianhistory.org/moments/postoff.html>.

²⁰ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 24–25.

newspaper were mailed from the office of publication, and Whitney had distributors who also mailed his newspaper. Apparently there was a dispute as to whether mailings by distributors also went free.²¹

When more two-cent Numerals were needed, Clark transferred their printing to the Government Printing Office, which printed the government's newspaper, *The Polynesian*. Abraham Fornander was the editor at that time, on good terms with the personnel of the *Commercial Advertiser*, and able to work out a sale of the assembled Numeral type, so that the third setting was preserved, and used to print off Plate 3-C.²² The printings of Plate 3-C probably took place in September 1859 and are distinguished from earlier printings at the *Commercial Advertiser* in that they were in black ink on grayish paper (fig. 1-E). Fornander later became widely recognized for his work on Hawaiian cultural history and served in numerous appointed positions in the Hawaiian government.²³

As late as January 17, 1860, Clark was still unsure free mail would last and for this reason informed the Lahaina postmaster that no canceling devices had been ordered. Clark wrote: "It is a question of whether the upcoming Legislature will continue the postage law. If it is abolished, stamps of any kind will be of no use."²⁴ However, to everyone's surprise, the volume of local mail kept increasing, and concerns that the new rates would be abolished faded.²⁵

About June of 1860, there was a need for more two-cent stamps, so the third setting was used to print Plate 3-D, again in black ink on grayish paper.

On November 24, 1860, Clark at last began the effort to secure low denomination stamps, by writing to Hawai'i's agent in Boston seeking more of the existing engraved five-cent stamps with the likeness of Kamehameha III (fig. 1-A) and also new one and two-cent stamps. The essays received back in Honolulu had a likeness of Kamehameha

²¹ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 24–26.

²² Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 163.

²³ A. Grove Day, *A Biographical Dictionary, History Makers Of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing of Honolulu, 1984) 42; Eleanor Harmon Davis, *Abraham Fornander, A Biography* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979) 194–265.

²⁴ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 37.

²⁵ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 63.

III, who died in 1854, and also had “Honolulu” as the country (fig. 2-A). They were unacceptable. Thereafter, Clark did order 20,000 of the Kamehameha III stamps.²⁶ The reorder of the engraved five-cent Kamehameha III is understandable. The design and engraving work had been done and paid for, and there would have been delays in creating a new five-cent stamp.

Time went by, but sometime in the first half of 1861, Postmaster Clark finally ordered from Boston lithographed two-cent stamps bearing the portrait of King Kamehameha IV (fig. 2-B). The stamp lacked a country name because “Hawaii” did not appear on the stamp and Postmaster Clark was blamed as he was the designer. While awaiting the arrival of these, Plates 3-E and 3-F were printed. The new two-cent stamps arrived and were placed in service sometime before December 1861,²⁷ and at this point there was no further need for the two-cent Numeral.

Lithographed one-cent stamps were not ordered as there apparently was little demand. The reasons are not clear. Perhaps the publishers of newspapers ignored the requirement of paying postage, and the postal authorities did not challenge this practice. Verification may have been difficult. It is suggested that recipients of newspapers would normally dispose of the wrappers, while envelopes were often saved, or where the letter was in one piece and folded, it was saved and the stamp or stamps along with it.²⁸

The supply of the lithographed two-cent stamps ran low, so there were two final printings from the third setting: Plate 3-G was printed in June of 1862, with black ink on grayish paper, and this was followed with Plate 3-Gx in September 1862. Plate 3-Gx was done in black ink on greenish-blue paper, and this color has made it most appealing to collectors (fig. 2-C).

Sometime in 1862, there was a reorder of the lithographed two-cent stamp. These apparently arrived later that year or in early 1863.²⁹

²⁶ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 164; Gill, “The Stamps Of Hawaii,” 563; Post Office In Paradise, “Boston Lithograph Issues—Clark Essays,” http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/bl_cles.html.

²⁷ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 176.

²⁸ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 162; suggested by Geoffrey Brewster.

²⁹ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 62.



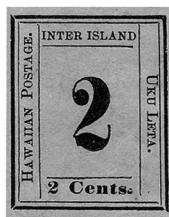
A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K

They are scarce for unknown reasons, but this scarcity probably was the reason for the printing of Plates 3-G and 3-Gx.

Earlier writers sometimes came to wrong conclusions due to lack of material or otherwise. For example, one authority wrote that the 1862 shortage of the lithographed two-cent stamp was due to a fire on the ship *Polynesia*, or a burglary.³⁰ There is no proof that the ship was carrying any Hawaiian stamps. It seems that a thief did enter Clark's residence and made off with keys to the post office and safe, stole the money in the safe, and then tossed all records and stamps into a nearby sewer. This, however, occurred back in July of 1861. It is suggested that the 1862 shortage of the reordered lithographed stamps was due to a failure to order enough.³¹

Late in 1862 or in early 1863, the third setting was changed into the fourth setting to provide one-cent Numerals from Plates 4-A and

³⁰ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 62–63.

³¹ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 64; J. F. Westerberg, "The Case of the Hawaiian Numerals," *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, vol. XXIX, no. III (1950) 187.

FIGURE 2 (*facing page*):

- A: Two-Cent, Die Proof Printed in 1860. It incorrectly depicts Kamehameha III instead of Kamehameha IV and shows "Honolulu" as the country.
- B: Two-Cent, Boston-Lithographed Stamp Printed in 1861. Kamehameha IV is correctly depicted, but the country name is missing.
- C: Two-Cent Numeral from Final Printing of the Third Setting (Plate 3-Gx). The Numeral was printed in 1862 with black ink on greenish-blue paper.
- D: Two-Cent Numeral from the Fifth Setting (Plate 5-A). The Numeral was printed in 1863 with black ink on gray-blue paper.
- E: Two-Cent Numeral from the Fifth Setting (Plate 5-B). The Numeral was printed in 1863 with dark blue ink on bluish paper.
- F: Two-Cent Numeral from the Fifth Setting (Plate 5-C). The Numeral was printed in 1863 with black ink on white paper.
- G: Ten-Cent Stamp of Nova Scotia. Design of the 1864 two-cent Hawai'i stamp was based on this stamp.
- H: Two-Cent, Orange Red, Perforated Stamp Issued in 1864. Kamehameha IV is featured on the stamp.
- I: One-Cent Numeral from the Sixth Setting (Plate 6-A).
- J: Two-Cent Numeral from the Seventh Setting (Plate 7-A).
- K: One-Cent Numeral from the Eighth Setting (Plate 8-A).

4-B. These were in black ink on white paper (fig. 1-B). Their necessity is not clear and used copies are scarce. Evidence for a lack of demand is that no printings of a one-cent Numeral were done with the repeated printings in the third setting. Perhaps the requirement that the one-cent stamps be used by publishers was not enforced. One explanation for the fourth setting is that although there was little postal usage, the supply was diminished due to the demands of collectors.³² Another explanation for the scarcity of used one-cent stamps is that those receiving newspapers tended to discard the wrapping.

Due to the shortage of the lithographed stamps in the first part of 1863, Clark had the fourth setting changed to the fifth setting and at least five Plates printed for two-cent Numerals.³³ These vary with respect to ink and/or paper, and some are scarce.

Plate 5-A was probably printed in April 1863, in black ink on gray blue paper (fig. 2-D). Only 136 have been found to exist, but there are probably more.³⁴ An offshoot is Plate 5-Ax, also probably printed in April 1863, in black ink but on grayish paper, and very scarce. As of the preparation of this article, there were no recorded copies of four of the ten types that made up the printed pane. If this is a final count, a full pane of ten can never be reconstructed. Because of the similarity in appearance (black ink on grayish paper) some stamp collectors have mistaken Numerals from this Plate as being from the earlier Plates of the third setting, but a close examination will show the characteristics of each of the ten types match only the Numerals of Plate 5-A.

Plate 5-B was probably printed in May 1863. This striking looking stamp was printed in dark blue on bluish paper (fig. 2-E). It is among the scarcest of all the Numerals. It has been suggested that only a few more than 86 presently exist.³⁵ In 1902, Numerals matching only the characteristics of those of Plate 5-B appeared at a San Francisco stamp show, but they did not comport with the other printings of the fifth setting. Another appeared in 1959 on paper that was a slightly differ-

³² Westerberg, "The Case of the Hawaiian Numerals," 188.

³³ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 60–61.

³⁴ J. F. Westerberg, "Hawaiian Numeral Stamp Count, 47 Collections, October 1974," from author's copy of notes.

³⁵ Westerberg, "Hawaiian Numeral Stamp Count," from author's copy notes.

ent bluish gray color. It is known today as Plate 5-Bx and is extremely scarce. So far only nine have been found to exist.³⁶ Plate 5-C was probably printed in June 1863 as black ink on white paper (fig. 2-F).

Clark resigned as Postmaster General and departed thereafter for the United States, and in February 1863, David Kalākaua, later to become king, was his successor.³⁷ William G. Irwin was one of Kalākaua's clerks and let him know that a foreign newspaper wrote that Hawai'i's stamps were among the poorest in the world. Irwin suggested Hawai'i get a perforated stamp based on the design of one from Nova Scotia (fig. 2-G). With Kalākaua's approval, Irwin had the National Bank Note Co. in New York City design a similar two-cent stamp and print 250,000. These perforated, orange red stamps were received in Honolulu in May or June, 1864 (fig. 2-H).³⁸ As an aside, Hawai'i's new two-cent stamp certainly equaled in appearance those of the United States and surpassed those of many other nations. These new stamps did away with any further need for a two-cent Numeral.

Irwin was born in England and moved with his parents to Hawai'i where he attended Punahou School. Irwin became a confidant of King Kalākaua, later represented the interests of sugar magnate Claus Spreckles, and retired as a wealthy man to the San Francisco peninsula in 1909. Irwin Park adjacent to the Aloha Tower in downtown Honolulu was donated as a memorial to him by his daughter Helene Fagan in 1930.³⁹

Despite the availability of the new perforated two-cent stamps, Numerals from a one-cent sixth setting, a two-cent seventh setting, and a one-cent eighth setting were issued in 1863 and 1864 (figs. 2-I, 2-J, and 2-K). Most serious collectors consider them as "Philatelic," that is produced primarily for stamp collecting purposes. Hawai'i early on recognized there was money to be made in selling to collectors

³⁶ Geoffrey Brewster, "Census of the 2 ct Black on Thick Bluish Gray Numeral (from Plate 5-Bx)," *Possessions, The Journal of the United States Possessions Philatelic Society*, vol. 30, no. 2, whole no. 112 (2009) 24-30; Geoffrey Brewster, telephone conversation with author, 2009.

³⁷ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 165.

³⁸ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 187-88; 193.

³⁹ *Palo Alto Daily News*, 24 Feb. 2007, <http://www.paloaltodailynews.com/article/2007-2-24-02-24-07-matters-historical>; HSB, 13 Dec. 2002, <http://www.starbulletin.com/2002/12/13/news/story3.html>.

and stamp dealers. By the 1860s, 20 years or so after Great Britain's first stamp appeared, stamp collecting and providing for collectors' wants had become an important business. The Numerals being dramatically different and from a far-off, exotic kingdom in the middle of the Pacific Ocean made them especially desirable to Europeans and Americans. The scarcity of used copies from these three Plates verifies they were primarily for philatelic purposes. Westerberg made a survey of 47 collections containing Numerals, and his notes of October 1974 show he found: seven used from Plate 6-A (one-cent stamps); nine used from Plate 7-A (two-cent stamps); and 21 used from Plate 8-A (one-cent stamps). In most of the earlier settings there are "covers" (envelopes) with cancelled stamps, but there is only one known instance in which a cancelled Numerals from any of these three settings appears on a cover.⁴⁰

Plate 8-A has a variety of special interest to collectors. During the printing, some of the type pieces along the left border of the cliché at Position 9 became loose, and as successive panes were printed these pieces increasingly slipped or turned, and eventually did not print. The result was most of "HAWAIIAN" dropped out to create the "HA . . ." variety (fig. 3-A).

Back in 1861, then Postmaster General Clark ordered 20,000 five-cent stamps from Boston for mail going abroad. These were the old "Kamehameha III" blue imperforate stamps (fig. 1-A). In early 1865 it became apparent the remaining supply of these would soon run out,⁴¹ and since it took as long as eight months for an order to be sent and the stamps received in Honolulu, the Post Office turned again to the Numerals with the ninth setting, that is Plate 9-A, to produce a five-cent Numeral in dark blue ink on blue paper. This occurred about February of 1865 and required significant changes to the clichés: the use of a large number "5" for the first time and the text changed for mail going abroad; "UKU LETA" was placed at the top; and "HAWAIIAN POSTAGE" repeated on the left and right sides (fig. 3-B). The plain and simple Numeral was now to appear in foreign correspon-

⁴⁰ Westerberg, "Hawaiian Numeral Stamp Count, 47 Collections, October 1974," from author's copy of notes.

⁴¹ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 123; Post Office In Paradise, "Numeral Issue—Ninth Setting," <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/numeral.html>.



A



B



C



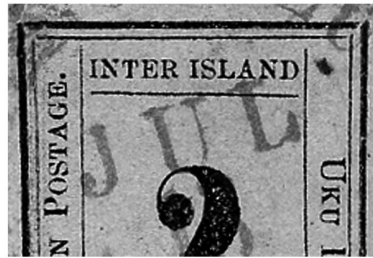
D



E



F



G

FIGURE 3:

- A: One-Cent Numeral from the Eighth Setting (Plate 8-A). HA, instead of HAWAIIAN, was printed when the left cliché border of Position 9 became loose.
- B: Five-Cent Numeral from the Ninth Setting (Plate 9-A). Printed in 1865 with dark blue ink on blue paper, this was this first Numeral used for foreign postage.
- C: Two-Cent Numeral from the Tenth Setting (Plate 10-A). Numeral printed in 1865 using dark blue ink on white paper.
- D: One-Cent Numeral from the Eleventh Setting (Plate 11-A). Numeral printed in 1865 using dark blue ink on white paper.
- E: Five-Cent Numeral from the Twelfth and Last Setting (Plate 12-A). INTERISLAND was incorrectly retained in the left border despite its use as foreign postage. Printed in 1866, dark blue ink was used on blue paper.
- F: Two-Cent Numeral from the Third Printing (Plate 3-F). Numeral enlarged twice its original size.
- G: Two-Cent Numeral from the Third Printing (Plate 3-G). Numeral enlarged twice its original size.

dence to become noticed by collectors, and certainly whet their appetite for Hawaiian stamps, and particularly Numerals.

During the first months of 1865, probably in February or March, Numerals were printed from the tenth setting (i.e., Plate 10-A, two cents) and the eleventh setting (i.e., Plate 11-A, one cent).⁴² Both are in dark blue ink on white paper (figs. 3-C and 3-D). There is a split among authorities as to why these were printed. An older minority view was that they were to take care of a shortage of the newly engraved two-cent stamp or collectors and dealers had bought out the lithographed two-cent stamp or both.⁴³ Most serious collectors today believe they were printed only to satisfy the demand of collectors.⁴⁴ Westerberg could only find five that were used for both Plates.⁴⁵ Even if that is so, they were still very attractive.

Arthur P. Brickwood succeeded Kalākaua as Postmaster General on March 18, 1865.⁴⁶ On April 26, 1865, the post office ordered from the National Bank Note Co. in New York 200,000 new engraved and perforated five-cent stamps, based on the design of the two-cent engraved stamp (fig. 2-H) but with a portrait of King Kamehameha V. Meanwhile, late in 1865 or early 1866, the supply of the older Kamehameha III five-cent stamps ordered back in 1861 (fig. 1-A) was almost exhausted, and the new engraved five-cent stamps had not reached Hawai'i, and indeed would not arrive until April or May of 1866.⁴⁷ The twelfth and last setting, that is Plate 12-A, was set up from Plate 11-A to print a five-cent Numeral in dark blue ink on blue paper (fig. 3-E). This setting was controversial. The printer through carelessness or haste left "INTERISLAND" on the left side, even though it was intended only for mail going abroad. It was genuinely used, and a number of cancelled copies on or off cover exist. Nevertheless, 19th

⁴² Westerberg, "The Case of the Hawaiian Numerals," 190.

⁴³ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 75.

⁴⁴ Post Office In Paradise, "Numeral Issue—Tenth and Eleventh Settings," <http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/Numeral.html>.

⁴⁵ Westerberg, "Hawaiian Numeral Stamp Count, 47 Collections, October 1974," from author's copy of notes.

⁴⁶ Westerberg, "The Case of the Hawaiian Numerals," 190.

⁴⁷ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 188.

century collectors were suspicious from the wording that it might not be authentic. In fact, Scott Publishing Co. which has provided a catalog that has been the “Bible” for most American collectors removed it from the 19th century Hawai’i listings for many years, and it was not re-listed as a genuine issue until the 1896 catalog. Crocker pointedly states that this is the only error that occurred in any of the stamps issued by the Hawaiian monarchy.⁴⁸

Plate 12-A marked the end of any further need for the Numerals. Thereafter, there were always ample supplies of the perforated “Bank Notes” with portraits of monarchs and important government figures.

As noted above, Westerberg, despite the lack of official records, determined the chronological sequence of the printings. However, as to the quantities printed from each Plate, the best we can do is work with what we have today. All estimates are at best “educated guesses.” Information is difficult to gather as many exist in private collections where no access is encouraged. The best current information from time to time comes from Geoffrey Brewster who has undertaken to do a census for some of the settings of all known or reported Numerals. It is an ongoing process as new material sometimes comes to light as collections are discovered or sold at auction.⁴⁹

Although today virtually all Numeral collectors and dealers follow Westerberg’s sequence as to the Numeral issues, Scott Publishing Co. does not. Starting in the latter half of the 19th century, Scott Publishing Co. has issued an annual catalog listing the stamps of all nations. Although it lists all the Hawaiian Numerals, its sequence is incorrect. For whatever reason, Scott has refused to change, and ignored repeated efforts by Westerberg to revise their system.⁵⁰ Scott probably received wrong information in the beginning and is now reluctant to change its numbering which has existed for over 100 years, and feels it makes no difference to serious collectors. The following demonstrates how far off Scott is:

⁴⁸ Meyer et al, *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 170; Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 76.

⁴⁹ Census results for Numerals appear from time to time in *Possessions, Journal of the United States Possessions Philatelic Society*. Inquiries can be made to Geoffrey Brewster, President, 6453 E. Stallion Rd., Paradise Valley, AZ 85253.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Brewster, personal communication.

Denomination	Westerberg's Sequence	Scott's Number
2 ct.	First Setting, Plate 1-A	13
1 ct	Second Setting, Plates 2-A and B	12
2 ct	Third Setting, Plates 3-A and B	13
2 ct	Third Setting, Plates 3-C to G	16
2 ct	Third Setting, Plate 3-Gx	14
1 ct	Fourth Setting, Plates 4-A and B	15
2 ct	Fifth Setting, Plate 5-A	18
2 ct	Fifth Setting, Plate 5-B	17
2 ct	Fifth Setting, Plate 5-C	20
1 ct	Sixth Setting, Plate 6-A	19
2 ct	Seventh Setting, Plate 7-A	24
1 ct	Eighth Setting, Plate 8-A	23
5 ct	Ninth Setting, Plate 9-A	21
2 ct	Tenth Setting, Plate 10-A	26
1 ct	Eleventh Setting, Plate 11-A	25
5 ct	Twelfth Setting, Plate 12-A	22

A short bit about plating. To “plate,” when used as a verb, means reconstructing the layout of a particular issue with individual stamps, pairs, or blocks, the collected stamps being placed in the positions as originally printed. The typeset Numerals with their individual characteristics especially lend themselves to this process.

Jean Baptiste Moens of Belgium is considered the earliest stamp dealer.⁵¹ He began receiving from Hawai‘i in the early 1860s sheets of Numerals and noticed that the same basic clichés reappeared in subsequent sheets and began noting this in his catalog.⁵² From the 1880s on, and probably earlier, there were collectors endeavoring to “plate” the Numerals.

Each of the ten Numeral clichés had certain flaws or attributes that differentiated it from the other nine. Each separate cliché with its constant differences is referred to as a “Type” in a Roman number to distinguish it from the other nine clichés. The cliché that is a Type V is easy to recognize as it has a noticeable leftward bend at the top of the

⁵¹ Blue Mauritius Research Companion, <http://www.helenmorgan.net/bm/biogs/Eoooo73b.htm>.

⁵² Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 159.

thin rule on the left side. Knowing the characteristics of a type, allows it to be located in a different setting no matter where positioned.

In 1909, Henry J. Crocker of San Francisco, probably drawing on his extensive Hawaiian collection, published his conclusions in *Hawaiian Numerals*, and for many years this was the authority in plating. With time, it became apparent that Crocker was incorrect in certain instances. A more definitive work was sought. To his credit Crocker recognized his work was a start, and expressly welcomed new information.⁵³

J. Frederick Westerberg, 1894-1980, was a prominent Hollywood cameraman in the 1920s and 1930s, who on retirement in the San Francisco area became interested in Numerals. He became associated with prominent stamp collectors in the area, and probably due to their urging, undertook to get the Numerals “straightened out.” He studied private collections, museum collections, auction catalogs, and other sources of information. Collectors of Numerals cooperated with him and made their materials or copies available. With few exceptions, he was able to find a Numeral or a copy of a Numeral (e.g., from a catalog) for each position on a given Plate. In 1968, he published *Plating the Hawaiian Numerals*, which remains today, 40 years later, the “Bible” on this subject. It has provided collectors with (1) a determination there were at least 25 Plates from the 12 settings; (2) the correct sequence of each of the 12 settings; (3) the correct sequence of the printing of each Plate where a setting had multiple Plates; (4) the major and minor characteristics that differentiate one cliché from another in a setting with multiple Plates; (5) a complete positioning of the Numerals related to a Plate; and (6) illustrations of almost all the Numerals. The ten separate types having been determined, his starting point for identifying their positions was the sequence in Plate 4-A (fig. 1-B) in the fourth setting, as this was the earliest known full pane of ten. He labeled the upper left stamp in that pane as a “Type I” (fig. 1-B), that in the upper right as a “Type II”, and so forth. Of course, a cliché at a certain position in Plate 4-A could be at a different position in other

⁵³ Crocker, *Hawaiian Numerals*, 11.

Plates. For each Plate, Westerberg accompanied his picture of each Plate with a small chart to show the position that a cliché identified by its type roman number could be found. For example, the cliché that is Type I at Position 1 in the fourth setting is shown on the chart for Plate 1-A of the earlier first setting as at position three; and at position two in the chart for the later eighth setting.

His photographic expertise allowed him to properly photograph the material he researched and made his illustrations legible. The illustrations and his text clearly identify many of the very minor differences that exist from Plate to Plate. The value of his work is easily demonstrated. In working with the third setting, there are Plates 3-C to 3-G all in black ink on grayish paper, each Plate printed at a different time. With a Numeral from one of these five Plates in hand, and by comparing such with Westerberg's illustrations, the proper Plate can be determined. Shown here are enlargements of Type V from Plate 3-F (fig. 3-F) and also from Plate 3-G (fig. 3-G), both at Position 5. The outward bend in the upper left rule is common to all Type V, but at the upper right corner in Plate 3-F, the right border rule extends above the horizontal rule. In Plate 3-G it does not and there is a noticeable gap. Westerberg's illustrations show and comments describe these differences.

Today, plating has become an important part of collecting Numerals. Auction catalogs and dealers who deal with Numeral collectors are expected to provide plating information, and they normally use terminology based on Westerberg's work. A complete identification will often be phrased to recite the setting, Plate, Type, and Position in a Plate. In an auction catalog, a lot might state the Numeral is a "Plate 3-D-V, Position 5," which means it is from the third setting, is located in the fourth Plate of that setting, is a Type V, and is the fifth stamp counting from the top left.

Plating is a real challenge for a collector as there are twelve settings, with a total of at least 25 Plates, so he or she must acquire 250 different Numerals to complete a reconstruction of all presently known Plates. Incidentally there are more to collect, depending how far one wants to take this. There are sometimes different papers and ink used in printing up a Plate and there are errors such as the "HA . . ." (fig. 3-A)

For a further study of this topic the following are good sources:

Westerberg's *Plating the Hawaiian Numerals*, Fred Gregory's website *Post Office In Paradise*, and Geoffrey Brewster's study of the large central number, "The Large Batnums."⁵⁴

In his conclusion on this topic, Meyer-Harris stated in 1948, perhaps with sarcasm, that:

[Plating the Numerals] . . . is an activity of absorbing interest to those philatelists who possess the combination of sufficient quantities of stamps and the special disposition necessary for such tedious and eye-straining study (Emphasis added.).⁵⁵

By the 1880s, Hawaiian stamps in general had become very popular world wide. The type set Numerals were easy to copy, for the print type was easily obtained. Much bogus material appeared. In addition to copies done fraudulently, there were instances where "Numerals" bearing no resemblance to the genuine were printed as souvenirs, or just to help collectors fill spaces in albums. Further, Numerals were affixed to envelopes with fake cancels, and cancels removed where an unused Numeral was worth more. In 1948, Meyer-Harris listed over 100 different forgeries.⁵⁶ All this is very treacherous territory for a beginner. Some forgeries are so well done that they are very difficult to identify, even for an expert.⁵⁷ For most serious Numeral collectors, comfort lies in the use of an expertising service. Two that are used a great deal with Numerals are The Philatelic Foundation in New York City and The Hawaiian Philatelic Society.⁵⁸

Where are the Numerals today? For the public, the best place to

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Brewster, "The Large Batnums" which appeared in *Possessions, Journal of the United States Possessions Philatelic Society* in the 1999 to 2000 issues, see nos. 73, 74 and 75; reprinted in full in *Po'oleka O Hawaii, The Quarterly Journal of the Hawaiian Philatelic Society*, no. 68 (Oct. 2001) 1-35.

⁵⁵ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 160.

⁵⁶ Meyer et al., *Hawaii, Its Stamps*, 382, 387-92.

⁵⁷ Fred Gregory, "'Pigs With Wings', Jean de Sperati's Adventures With Hawaiians," *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, vol. 84, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2005) 279-90 and no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2005) 355-68.

⁵⁸ The Philatelic Foundation, located in New York, will review stamps from any country. The Hawaiian Philatelic Society only has expertise in Hawai'i. The Society's Expertising Committee is presently chaired by Don Medcalf of Hawaiian Stamp & Coin in Honolulu. Inquiries should be made to Kay Hoke.

see them is the Thomas Tapling Collection, which is at the British Library in London.⁵⁹ At his death in 1891, Tapling, a very wealthy Englishman, had assembled what was then the world's greatest collection of stamps. The Hawaiian portion is extensive and includes over 100 Numerals. The Bishop Museum in Honolulu has the collection of Thomas G. Thrum with 17 Numerals, and they also have one on cover from another collection. Thrum was the publisher of *The Hawaiian Annual*, and his collection encompasses more than Numerals.

During the 1990s, there were three major Hawai'i stamp collections, each assembled by a Hawai'i resident. All were sold at auction, so today the Numerals from these are scattered and in other hands. The premier collection was that of Thurston Twigg-Smith which he gathered under the auspicious of the *Honolulu Advertiser*. It was the greatest collection of Hawai'i stamps ever assembled. It went to auction in New York City in November 1995, and the catalog had over 500 lots of Numerals.⁶⁰ In September 1996, the collection of Charles J. Pietsch, III, with 157 Numeral-related lots was auctioned. The catalog preface by Fred Gregory described these Numerals as a "priceless reference resource for plating."⁶¹ Then, in November 1998, the collection of Christian H. Aall with 207 Numerals was auctioned in New York.⁶² In March 2007, an auction of the personal Hawai'i stamps of Thurston Twigg-Smith included 76 Numeral lots.⁶³ These sales attracted considerable attention and resulted in the Numerals being picked up by collectors in Hawai'i, but also throughout the United States and probably abroad.

Can a Numeral be considered a good investment? This depends primarily on scarcity. The following examples are illustrative, with the

⁵⁹ David Beech, Head of Philatelic Collections, the British Library, personal communication.

⁶⁰ Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc, New York City, "The Honolulu Advertiser Collection," vol. 1-3 (Nov. 1995).

⁶¹ Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc., New York City, "The Charles J. Pietsch III Collection" (Sept. 1996).

⁶² Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc, New York City, "The Christian H. Aall Collection" (Nov. 1998).

⁶³ Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc, New York City, "The Thurston Twigg-Smith Collection of Hawaiian Stamps and Postal History" (Mar. 2007).

Scott Publishing Co. suggested retail values for unused stamps being from their 1980⁶⁴ and 2009 catalogs.

Numeral (Scott No.)	1980 Catalog	2009 Catalog	Percentage Increase
No. 12 (Plate 2-A)	\$2,000	\$17,500	875%
No. 16 (Plate 3-C to G)	\$ 325	\$ 1,000	300%
No. 17 (Plate 5-B)	\$3,000	\$12,000	400%

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed slightly over 940 on September 2, 1980.⁶⁵ On November 13, 2009, it closed slightly over 10,240, an increase of over 1,000 percent.⁶⁶ Stocks do not provide the pleasure that comes with collecting. For the collector, any value as an investment should be secondary.

⁶⁴ Scott Publishing Co., *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* (Ohio: 1980) 678–79.

⁶⁵ Perigon Partners of San Francisco, California, e-mail message to author, 13 Nov. 2009.

⁶⁶ *HA*, 14 Nov. 2009.

